AAC

Easy as 123

PDSB AAC Resource SLPs:
Paula Malczewski, Julia Malpartida, Valerie Wells

While this presentation is deeply rooted in academic research, it is essential to integrate this learning with an understanding of each student's full intersectional identity to ensure our approach is both inclusive and effective.

Objectives

- **What is AAC?**
  - ○ Unaided vs aided
  - ○ No-/ low-tech, high-tech

- **Framework for AAC Engagement**

- **Resources and videos**

What is AAC?

What is AAC?

AAC

- stands for "**A**ugmentative and/or **A**lternative **C**ommunication"

- describes any form of communication other than speaking

- Examples of AAC include:
    - pointing to objects or photos
    - exchanging pictures
    - sign language
    - activating a button or switch
    - touching a device that speaks a message

Unaided AAC

Unaided: Using the physical body to communicate

- physical approach
- facial expressions
- gestures: waving, pointing, leading, using another person's hand as tool
- manual signs (e.g., ASL)

Aided AAC

Aided: Using tools external to one's body to communicate

- pictures
- drawings
- audio recordings
- written and electronic text
- speech-generating devices

No/Low-Tech AAC

- There are different levels of technology

- **No tech AAC** generally refers to natural gestures or signs

- **Low-tech** (sometimes called "light tech") are typically simple electronic devices with recorded speech but they can also refer to picture boards or communication books

High-tech AAC

- Digital devices that have different symbols (pictures or words) on the screen

- The screen may change once a symbol is touched

- Students select the symbols to create their message and the device speaks it aloud

- Individuals may access high-tech AAC through touch, 1 or more switches, or eye gaze

AAC Users

- Users of AAC may use a combination of tools to communicate

- Examples:
  - A student can use vocalizations, body movements and/or facial expressions to tell adults in their environment they want or don't want something. They may be able to use a few signs when prompted
  - Another student might be able to say single words orally and have an iPad with a communication app to communicate in phrases or sentences
  - A third student might communicate with their family using word approximations but at school, pairs single word attempts with a communication book to share a more complete message with a peer
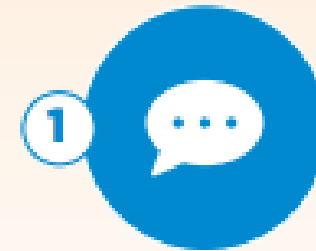
Framework for AAC Engagement

AAC – Easy as 1, 2, 3

1. Student's AAC close at hand

2. Incorporate student interest

3. Encourage and model communication

Scan QR code to access Easy as 1 2 3 Handout

1. Have the Child's AAC Close at Hand

"I need my voice"

- Student **<u>must</u>** have the AAC system with them consistently
- Make a plan for how the AAC system will be used throughout the day
  - o In the classroom: Device is used at student's desk, at carpet
  - o During outdoor recess: Provide laminated screenshots or model on playground board, if available
  - o In the gym or around "messy" activities: Laminated screenshots

1. Have the Child's AAC Close at Hand

- Teach when and when not appropriate to speak, rather than taking away the device

- When AAC device is not in use, charge the system (e.g., when student is outside, plug in at the end of the day as child is going home)

- Involve the student in taking ownership of their AAC system as much as possible

2. Incorporate Student Interests

"Know how I am learning to communicate"

- Students learn best when their interests are included

- Find out what their interests are:
  - Be present
  - Observe what the student is drawn to
  - Ask family/caregivers for ideas and input
  - Consider all their senses:
    - Auditory - what do they like listening to?
    - Visual - what do they like looking at?
    - Tactile - what materials do they like touching/feeling?
    - Olfactory - what scents do they enjoy smelling?
    - Taste – what do they enjoy consuming?

2. Incorporate Student Interests

- Use the Four Ls
  - **Look** at what the individual is interested in and the gestures they use
  - **Listen** to what they say with their communication system/word approximations
  - **Learn** about their interests and hopes
  - **Let them lead** the way in your interaction

4L
STEPS TO FOLLOWING YOUR CHILD'S LEAD

LOOK

LISTEN

LEARN

LET THEM LEAD

From: AAC Manual for Caregivers by Specialised ATC, SPD 2019
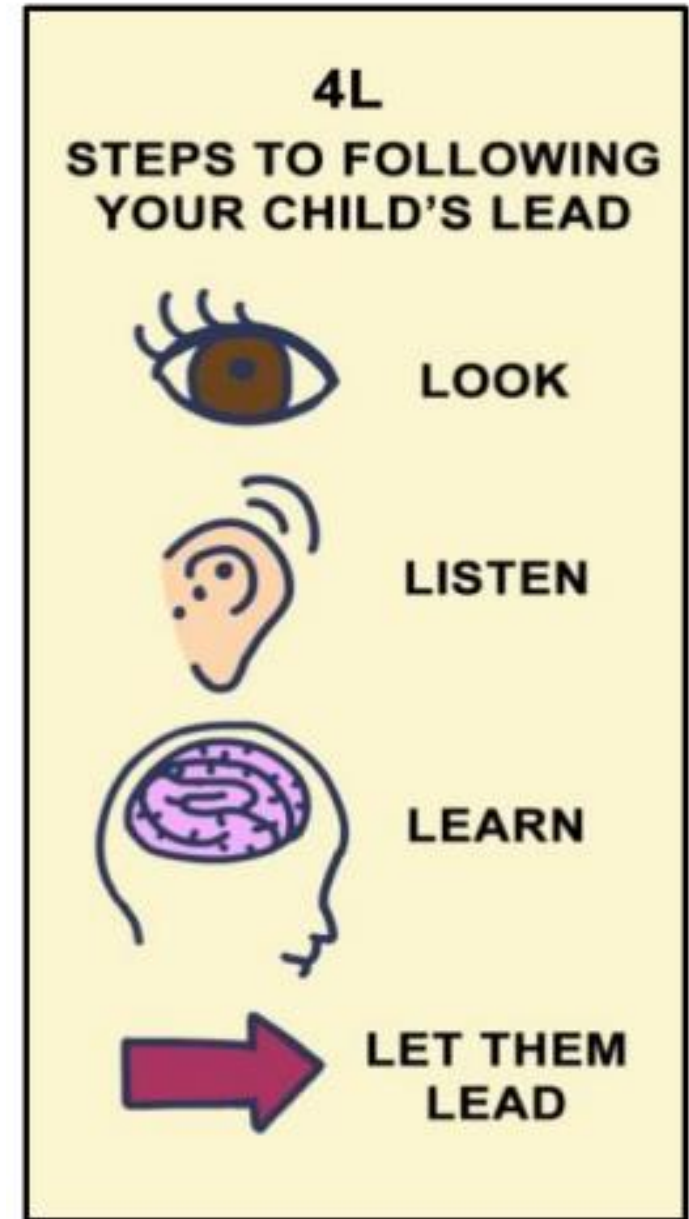
2. Incorporate Student Interests

- [Video example](#) of incorporating interests using AAC ("Go" game with cars)

2. Incorporate Student Interests

3. Encourage and model communication

Encourage communication:

- Engage and interact

- Ask open-ended questions

- Make comments to keep the conversation going

Engage and Interact

- The longer you engage with your student(s), the more opportunities they will have for interaction and learning
- Interactions must go back and forth
- When the adult stops responding, the conversation stops

Adult	What happened on this page?
Student	Um, they are mad.
Adult	Yes, right.

Adult	What are you drawing?
Student	A dog.
Adult	Good job.

Ask Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions:
- have more than 1 possible answer
- cannot be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'
- create more back and forth turns in conversations
- can be opportunities to ask for more information
- provide a chance to extend students' learning
- facilitate engagement and student participation

Ask Open-Ended Questions

Close-ended questions:

- can be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no'
- usually have 1 "right" specific answer
- do not support engagement or ongoing participation
- stop the conversation

Examples of close-ended questions:

Do you like that?	Are you tired?
Are you happy?	What colour is that?
Can I help you?	Do you want more?

Ask Open-Ended Questions

- Turn these close ended questions to open-ended ones

Close-Ended Question	Open-Ended Question
Do you want your snack?	
Can you turn the page?	
Should we go outside?	

Ask Open-Ended Questions

- Turn these close ended questions to open-ended ones

Close-Ended Question	Open-Ended Question
Do you want your snack?	What do you want to eat? What do you want?
Can you turn the page?	What do you think happens next? What should we do?
Should we go outside?	Where should we go? What's next?

Make Comments

- Comments are statements, rather than a question
- They support continued conversation and encourage initiation
- Comments provide language that students can imitate and eventually use independently

Comments

- When making a comment, use language that the student can understand.
- Provide additional wait time after making a comment to allow the student time to respond

Close-Ended Question	Comment
Do you want your snack?	**You look** hungry! Time for snack.
Can you turn the page?	**I wonder** what happens next! Turn the page.
Should we go outside?	**Let's** go outside.

Engage and Interact

Adult	Why do animals hibernate?
Student	They want to get away from winter.
Adult	Why do you think they want to get away?
Student	Because there is no food.
Adult	Yes, some animals hibernate because food is hard to find in the winter. So they eat a lot when there is food available and go into a long sleep over the winter.

Engage and Interact

Adult	What are you drawing?
Student	A dog
Adult	Nice. What made you think about a dog?
Student	It's my dog. His name is Scout.
Adult	Tell me more about what you like to do with Scout.

3. Encourage and model communication

Model communication:

- Use their AAC system, or your own paper copy
- Allow more pause time than you think you need

3. Encourage and model communication

Aided Language Stimulation:

- Evidence-based strategy to support language and communication skills in students who use AAC (sometimes called "modeling")

- Technique that is taught to communication partners - point to symbols on the system while talking to the student

- Purpose is to show language on an AAC system so that students can learn how to use this tool for communication purposes

AIDED
LANGUAGE
STIMULATION
EXPLAINED

by Christopher Bugaj

CREATED USING PowToon

Video What is Aided Language Stimulation

By 18 months babies have heard **4,380 hours of spoken language** and we don't expect them to be fluent speakers yet.

If AAC learners only see symbols modeled for communication twice weekly for 20-30 minutes, it will take **84 years** for them to have the same exposure to aided language as an 18 month old has to spoken language.

-Jane Korsten, SLP

Remember….

Every kid is one caring adult away from being a success story.

– Josh Shipp

- Engage with **compassion**

- Find the **joy** in your interactions

- When in doubt, **model** it out

- Practice makes **progress**

- **YOU** make the difference

For Action

I am committed to applying this learning by adapting my practice to better address the diverse needs of my students, ensuring that my approach is both informed and responsive to their unique contexts by.......

Questions

Sample videos

- [Combining words, AAC, gestures and expanding phrases](#)

- [Older student conversation with AAC (multiple forms of communication)](#)

- [Using AAC during baking activity](#)

- [Using AAC in a group setting](#)

- [AAC with group of students - making comments](#)

SLP Department AAC Resources

- PDSB SLP Dept handouts regarding AAC:
  - [Introduction to AAC](#)
  - [Modelling with AAC](#)
  - [Communicate with me - Easy as 1, 2, 3](#)

- My Site
  - Hover over Departments
  - Scroll down to 'Special Education, Social-Emotional Learning, and Wellbeing'
  - Click 'Speech and Language Pathology Services in School'
    - Resources for Educators' > 'Communication Resources' > 'Augmentative and Alternative Communication'

External Resources

- Book: "Strive for Five Conversations: A Framework That Gets Kids Talking to Accelerate Their Language Comprehension and Literacy" by Sonia Cabell and Tricia Zucker. Open-access article can be found here:

https://ila.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/trtr.2266

- AAC Manual for Caregivers:

Manual-AAC-for-Caregivers-2019.pdf (spd.org.sg)

- What is Aided Language Stimulation (Assistiveware):

https://www.assistiveware.com/learn-aac/aided-language-stimulation

External Resources

- Saltillo/AAC Language Lab Resources:
  - <u>100 High Frequency Core Word list</u> - more common 'core' words

  - <u>Give Me Five</u> – a quick handout to list the top 5 core words to model

  - <u>Activity First</u> – a detailed handout on choosing activities and language to model on an AAC system